

Published: Jan. 6, 2015, Kokomo Tribune [Page: A4]

http://www.kokomotribune.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-running-for-two-offices/article_2ef09cce-9504-11e4-be6f-9be1486d50bf.html

Editorial: Running for two offices?

As was reported in an Associated Press story we published Thursday, state Sen. Mike Delph is set to introduce a measure allowing Gov. Mike Pence to run for both re-election and the presidency simultaneously.

“Indiana law currently prohibits candidates from seeking a state office and federal office on the same ballot,” read the AP story.

We hope Delph isn’t acting at the governor’s request.

As we’ve written in previous editorials, Pence would be a formidable contender for the Republican nomination should he decide to run. He is far from the first Hoosier politician who has struggled with this issue.

“In the 1988 election, state lawmakers approved legislation that allowed former Democratic U.S. Rep. Lee Hamilton and former Republican U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar to run for re-election to their respective seats and appear on the presidential ticket — if they chose to run,” reported the AP. “The 1988 change only affected a federal officeholder seeking another federal office.”

Another potential 2016 GOP presidential candidate, Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul, has tried and failed to make similar changes.

“A bill allowing Paul to simultaneously run for the presidency and re-election to his Senate seat in 2016 died earlier this week when the Kentucky legislature adjourned for the year,” reported Alan Silverleib, CNN political producer, April 17, 2014.

Yet another possible Republican contender for the White House, Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, faces the same dilemma.

“[Rubio] could wait to see whether he’s crowned the party’s nominee at the Republican National Convention before abandoning his Senate bid,” reported Politico’s Manu Raju May 7, 2013. “But if he were to lose ... he couldn’t go back to the Senate.”

Not every state has such restrictions. Republican Wisconsin Rep. Paul Ryan benefited during his 2012 vice presidential run from a change in his state’s law.

“[Lyndon B.] Johnson had Texas law changed so he could run simultaneously for re-election to the U.S. Senate in 1960 and appear on the presidential ticket with John F. Kennedy,” reported Timothy McNulty and Tom Troy Block of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Aug. 14, 2012. “Legislators in other states liked this ambition-friendly idea and adopted similar measures, such as the one allowing Ryan to run for two offices.”

Keeping one’s options open in this regard does seem to indicate a lack of focus, and it’s not like you or we could do the same at our jobs.

Pence soon should ask Delph to not introduce his bill. Otherwise, Hoosiers in 2016 might not get the governor for whom they voted.